

infrastructure, national defense, whatever we see that is a necessity, that we can move that fourth from one to the other. But I think what I am hammering hard on is paying at least half of it on the debt. By applying the framework, this framework to the budget, we are told that we can pay off the national debt by the year 2012. It would retire over 30 percent of the debt in 5 years. I think that is just amazing. Many of us can see 5 years down the road. I think this is the most sound way to both plan for the future and reap both short and long-term rewards from the growing surplus. As anyone outside the Beltway knows, when you have some extra money, it is important to pay off your debts. This is a simple idea that many Americans practice whenever they can. We should learn from them and do the same thing here in Washington.

The benefits of paying down the debt are enormous and long lasting. One of the most important is the more we lower the national debt, the less we will have to pay in interest on that debt. As of 5 p.m. this afternoon, this very day, our national debt was approximately \$5.75 trillion. During FY 1999 we paid \$229 billion, Mr. Speaker, in interest on this debt. To put that number in perspective, during the same year we spent \$275.5 billion on national defense. That is only \$46 billion more than our interest payment. Our interest payment is estimated to go down to \$220 billion in our current budget year because we are paying off a small portion of the debt. It certainly affects it. This is a portion of our Federal budget that we cannot reduce by any other means other than paying down on the national debt. Imagine how we can reduce that number if we really dedicate ourselves to it. This is money that would be available for tax cuts, many of which I support, assistance of senior citizens and other efforts to maintain our economic growth and improve the future for our children and for our grandchildren. Tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, we will vote on a framework for the coming year's budget. As we look at the surpluses from anywhere from \$200 billion to \$637 billion over the next 5 years, the most responsible thing we can do is dedicate half of it to paying down on the debt.

Mr. MINGE. I would like to thank my colleague from Texas for that comment. I would like to just emphasize for the benefit of all of our colleagues that we have heard from people from the Midwest, from the northern part of the country, we have heard from people from the southern part of the country, from the East Coast, from the West Coast. All areas have spoken out here this evening from within our ranks and said that the first goal has got to be to pay down on this enormous debt that we have, over \$20,000 for each man, woman and child. If you hear anyone on the other side of the aisle claim that this is not what is happening, that the publicly held debt is going to be

smaller, do not be beguiled by that. What is truly happening is they are hiding behind the Social Security trust fund and they are assuming that we do not have to prepay whatever the Social Security trust fund buys in terms of government bonds. That is just as much debt as any other debt that we have. Ask why is it under the Republican budget that we have to raise the debt ceiling, go up to \$5.9 trillion? If we are reducing the debt, we should not be increasing the debt ceiling. I sit on the Committee on the Budget. I am embarrassed that that committee has reported out a proposal, the Republican proposal, which in a time of surpluses requires a higher debt ceiling than we have ever had before in this country. This is fiscal irresponsibility of the greatest order. You can tell from these charts, if what has been promised by the Republicans on the Committee on the Budget is going to occur, the path is towards a larger debt for this country, a greater burden for our children and our grandchildren. This does not make sense. This is fiscal irresponsibility. We have alternative budgets which will be presented tomorrow coming from the Democratic Caucus, from the Blue Dog group. They will respectively propose reducing our Nation's debt in a realistic fashion. It is not just by hiding behind the Social Security trust fund, it is by doing the heavy lifting and denying ourselves some of the dessert that we would like to be able to have and a promise on the eve of an election. I think that political strength and integrity depends upon saying to our constituents, there are certain things that are high national priorities and at the top of the list is dealing responsibly with our Nation's debt and using our surplus to reduce it; secondly, to recognize that tax simplification and tax fairness requires some modest adjustments; and, third, that we have some priority programs. This evening, my colleagues have discussed what these programs are. Veterans, certain defense investments, education, agriculture, health care. These are top priorities that we have as a country. We have to fit it all together. We would like to be able to do all things for all people. I would like to be in a situation where I did not have to pay any tax at all. But we know that we are not going to be able to sustain our country and deal responsibly with the affairs of state unless we address not only priorities but also the debt burden that we are leaving to the next generation.

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REPUBLICAN BUDGET PROPOSAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, it is a real privilege to be here tonight to talk to my colleagues as well as people all

across America about what is going to happen in this Chamber tomorrow. This is going to be another in a series of very important budgets to be presented here tomorrow that once again we will have the opportunity in this Chamber to show the American people that we are serious about fiscal responsibility. Because tomorrow we are once again going to have a budget that achieves balance. We are not going to spend more money than we take in.

□ 2045

In fact, we are going to take in more money than we are going to spend.

We have heard a lot of conversation here tonight about a surplus. Well, that surplus means that we have more money on hand than what we are going to spend, but really, when there is a \$5.5 trillion debt that this country owes we do not really have a real surplus. We only have a surplus when we finally get to the day when we pay that debt off.

We are going to talk about that tonight and we are going to talk even more about it tomorrow.

I do want to take just a minute to commend my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who for the last hour have been talking about their budget. The Blue Dogs are a group of conservatives on that side who do come forward with a lot of good ideas from time to time. In fact, that group votes with the conservative majority in this House on a number of occasions. The problem is that there are only 20 or 25 or 30 of those folks on that side, somewhere around 10 percent of the total number of people on the Democratic side of the aisle, and they are simply not going to carry the day on that side of the aisle.

If they were, if their philosophy were the philosophy that would be adopted by that side of the aisle, perhaps they would still be in power over here.

The American public saw through this in 1994, sent a new majority to Congress who promised to be fiscally conservative and responsible to the American people and tomorrow we are once again going to be fiscally responsible.

Their budget is not a totally bad budget because it does several things that I like. It does address paying down the debt. It does address providing tax relief to hard-working Americans and at the same time provides an increase in funding for very valuable programs, some of which, again, we are going to talk about tonight.

So I look forward to debating with those folks tomorrow and to having a conversation with them about their ideas and giving us an opportunity to explain why our ideas are better.

Tomorrow is going to be another very important day in the history of the House of Representatives because for the last 6 years we have had a chairman of the House Committee on the Budget, the gentleman from the great State of Ohio (Mr. KASICH).

The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) is not running for reelection. He is retiring from the House so tomorrow will be the last budget that he presents on the floor of this House. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH) is the author of the balanced budget of 1997. He is the author of the balanced budget of 1996 and 1995 and each year subsequent to 1997, but 1997 is the critical year because that is the year that we actually did achieve a balanced budget in this House and we struck an agreement with the President that has moved this country forward into this era of having excess cashflow on hand.

Tomorrow we are going to pass another balanced budget in the era of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KASICH), and that balanced budget that we pass tomorrow is going to provide six critical things to the American people.

First of all, we are going to protect 100 percent of the Social Security surplus. Now what that means is that we are going to take every dime that the American people pay in Social Security taxes and we are going to put it away to make sure that every single penny of that money is used for exactly what it is designed to be used for, and that is for Social Security benefits.

The other side over here talks a lot about, we have to do this and that with this so-called surplus that they refer to, but the ironic thing is they were in control of this House prior to 1995 for 42 years. During that 42 years, we became mired in debt to the tune of almost \$5 trillion. During that 42 years, we spent Social Security money year in and year out to pay our bills. We did not set aside that money for what it was designed to be used for, and that is to pay Social Security benefits.

Tomorrow we are once again going to dedicate all of the Social Security taxes that are sent to Washington for exactly what it is designed to be used for, and that is to pay Social Security benefits.

This chart that we have up here right now illustrates exactly what I just said. It starts back in 1985 and shows how much money we used on an annual basis, and I say we, how much money Congress used to pay our bills every month that came out of the Social Security trust fund. Here it is. We reached a high of in excess of \$80 billion. It started out in 1985 at somewhere around \$10 billion, but look over on the end and look what happened in 1999, after the new majority came in and put its balanced budget in place.

What have we done with Social Security taxes? We have started spending zero of the Social Security tax monies for anything other than Social Security benefits. 1999 and this year again we will take all of the Social Security tax money, we will put it into a real Social Security trust fund and we will use it for nothing other than to pay Social Security benefits.

The next thing that we are going to do as a part of this budget is that we are going to strengthen Medicare, in-

cluding a prescription drug benefit that is going to be made available to senior citizens. We have set aside \$40 billion in our budget for prescription drugs.

We do not write that prescription drug program. The committees of jurisdiction will be working on that, and they are going to be able to draft a prescription drug program that will be of benefit to our senior citizens for years to come. The \$40 billion is going to be provided for over a 5-year period.

We are going to retire the public debt that has been talked about here for the last hour by the year 2013.

I have some other colleagues here who are going to talk a little more specifically about that.

The gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. MINGE), who is my good friend and I serve on the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Agriculture with him, he is a very sincere individual and what he just told us was that under the Blue Dog budget, which is a much more fiscally conservative budget than what the Democrats will be proposing tomorrow, they are going to pay down \$85 billion of the public debt over the next 5 years.

Under our budget, over the next 5 years, we are going to pay down \$1 trillion of the public debt, \$1 trillion.

The next thing we are going to do is we are going to promote tax fairness for families, farmers and seniors. We have been passing some tax reduction bills up here over the last month or so that are going to the heart of what America is all about. We are providing tax relief for married couples. We are providing tax relief for senior citizens, encouraging those senior citizens to stay in the workforce, make the valuable contribution which they are capable of making.

This budget is going to provide money that is going to allow additional tax fairness opportunities for farmers, families and seniors.

The next thing we are going to do is we are going to restore America's defense. Currently, our defense of this country, our national security, is in a terrible state. It is in a terrible state because we simply are having to fight every year up here with the White House over how much money we are going to be able to put into defense.

We are going to be providing tomorrow \$17 billion more in defense spending over what we provided in last year's budget. That money is going to go into three primary areas. It is going to go in the area of readiness, going to go in the area of procurement and it is going to go in the area of quality of life so that we can continue, number one, to attract the very finest young men and women that this country has to offer into each branch of our services. We are going to equip them with the highest technology, from a weapons system perspective, that is available to mankind. Then again we are going to make sure that they are the best trained Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy in the world.

The last thing that we are going to do is we are going to strengthen the support for education and science. There is no greater asset in this country than our children, but our children are only able to contribute based upon the level of education that they have. It is not as much the amount of money that is put into education. It is where it is put. Under our budget, we are going to put a little bit more money in there and we are going to allow flexibility in our education system to allow more money to go to the State and local level where the rubber meets the road and the people know what is needed to educate our children in a better manner than what they are being educated today.

At this time I would like to stop and I would like to recognize my friend, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), for any comments he might like to make, my fellow Member on the Committee on the Budget.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to make a lot of comments because we have other Members who are going to go into specific detail, but I would like to make some general comments before that happens to say that when we started in 1995 to get our country's financial house in order, as the majority party, we were looking at deficits that were actually going to increase every year. In 1997, we began to develop a budget that ultimately turned our deficits into surpluses. We tried earlier but the President kept vetoing it. We finally had an agreement. We were moving closer towards eliminating those deficits but by 1998 that budget, for the first time since 1968, we had more money coming into the Federal Government than going out. Last year, in 1999, for the first year since 1960, we were not spending the Social Security reserves.

In the next 10 years, we estimate there is going to be \$4 trillion of surplus revenues, \$4 trillion. Two trillion of those dollars are being walled off for Social Security because that is what they are. We are going to set them off, and I know my colleague is going to talk about that. The exciting thing is that is going to be there for debt reduction. So we have \$2 trillion left.

Basically, the President and too many of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to take that \$2 trillion that is left and spend it.

What we know is we need to do more debt reduction and we know that we need to have a tax cut. People are going to be saying, well, a tax cut is only going to the wealthy. No, it is going to the people who pay taxes. The people who pay taxes are going to benefit from the tax cut.

Two years ago we attempted to have a tax cut that would be comprehensive and something that we clearly could afford, and it included a number of items. This year we separated them.

The first tax cut that we moved forward with was the marriage penalty tax, and the logic behind the marriage penalty tax was why should a couple that then gets married pay \$1,400 more? That passed this Chamber by a fairly overwhelming majority, with a number of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle joining us.

The second tax cut that we moved forward with was the penalty tax on Social Security. Why should someone who has earned Social Security, who makes more than \$17,000, for every three dollars lose a dollar in Social Security? Obviously they should not, and we brought forward this legislation that passed with a wide margin on both sides of the aisle after our colleagues on the other side of the aisle had criticized this proposal for years, and it passed by all the members of the Senate just recently.

So I would just like to conclude by saying over the last 6 years we have gotten our country's financial house in order. We have balanced the Federal budget. We are having surpluses. Now we are managing those surpluses. We are not spending any of the Social Security trust fund money. We have walled it off. We are paying back debt. We are going to have significant but meaningful tax cuts, and we are going to set aside in the next 5 years \$200 billion for tax cuts. They will be targeted tax cuts that deal with fairness, enabling people to buy health insurance; enabling people to have retirement funds and set aside more money for their retirement; enabling people to not pay the penalty on the marriage when they get married; and enabling Social Security workers to continue to work.

With the details of many of our proposals, I would like to acknowledge the presence of my colleague from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), who has really been a leader in so much of this and really was there in the beginning when we started this process.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) would yield, I would say that while I appreciate the comments of the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), I cannot say I was here at the beginning of this process because, as he pointed out, it really began in 1995 with the change in majority control of this body.

I think more than any other issue, Democrats lost control of Congress and Republicans took control of Congress on the fundamental commitment to change the way we look at this country's finances, to balance the Federal budget, to balance it in 7 years and to do it while cutting taxes. Critics at the time, the other side of the aisle at the time, said that is simply impossible; it cannot be done; it is a political gimmick; this is just a bunch of rhetoric.

The Republican majority demonstrated over the next 2 years that they were serious, they were committed to this goal no matter how dif-

ficult at times some of the choices may have appeared. They put forward a balanced budget. They put forward a balanced budget that even included tax relief. The President vetoed that program but the American people spoke loud and clear over the ensuing 2 years, resoundingly supporting the goal of balancing the budget and in 1996 we had a Democrat President agree with a Republican-controlled Congress that we should and could balance the budget, and we should and could do it while cutting taxes. That was really the beginning of an enormous change in the way this country does its books.

We passed the Balanced Budget Act in 1997 and we saw the first unified balanced budget in 1998, and even then the critics said, well, yes the budget has been balanced but Social Security is still being borrowed from.

□ 2100

And it was last year that, again, the Republicans lead on this issue by stating clearly and unequivocally we are going to balance the budget without using Social Security. And, again, the President said it cannot be done.

And here is an outline of exactly where the President was just 1 year ago; here is his budget. It sets aside 62 percent of the Social Security surplus, spent almost 40 percent of the Social Security Trust Fund surplus. The Republican budget, by contrast, said, no, Mr. President, that is wrong. We should set aside every penny of the Social Security surplus.

And in point of fact, there was another important turning point when, again, last year in the budget debate the President quite literally changed his mind. He agreed with the Republican Congress that we could and should set aside every penny of the Social Security Trust Fund surplus, and that lead to really another historic achievement, the Republican-lead Congress passing legislation that balanced the budget without using Social Security for the first time in 40 years.

Even during the budget debate last year, though, the critics still said no, it cannot be done. It will not happen. They said we were using certain projections; we were using estimates. The simple fact is, of course, we were and we are. We are putting together a budget that is trying to look forward 5 years. We are making estimates about revenue growth, estimates about how we will spend on Medicare and Social Security. We are trying to make the best possible projections.

We have estimated less than 3 percent economic growth. I think that is realistic. Obviously, only time will tell. If we continue on the path that we began, first in 1995, and again with this historic achievement last year, then the economy will be better, the American people will be better off, and better off for a few fundamental reasons.

My colleague from Georgia pointed out that we have begun not just balancing the budget without Social Secu-

rity, we actually have begun paying down debt. This graph gives a very clear picture of how that process started, when it started, and where we are today. In 1998, paying back over \$50 billion in the public debt; 1999, over \$80 billion; and this current fiscal year, 2000, we will top \$150 billion in debt repayment. Finally, with the budget we are working on now, we will take the 4-year total and a reduction in the public debt to over \$450 billion.

This is what those on the other side of the aisle might call fiscally irresponsible, but I think it is not just a step in the right direction, it is the fundamentally correct fiscal policy for the country at this particular time. Because by paying down this debt, we are doing an enormous favor to working families all across the country.

We are helping to keep interest rates low. When interest rates are lower, the cost of a home mortgage is lower, the cost of a college loan or automobile loan is lower, working capital loan for a small business, all of those costs are lower. Over the life of a \$100,000 home mortgage, that can mean \$20,000 or \$30,000 to a family, and that is money they do not have to send to Washington and hope that we return to them. It stays in their pocket. They can invest in their family's quality of life, their children's education or health care, or save it for a rainy day.

So we have begun the process of paying down debt. And with this Republican budget that we will be debating on the floor tomorrow, it will pay down over \$170 billion in debt. Now, we could cut spending further and pay down a little bit more in debt, but that is, obviously, a difficult task, to a certain extent, when we have such a sharply divided House of Representatives. We could decide not to return any money to working families and try to pay down a little more debt, but at the same time, I think it is important that we remember where that money came from.

Moreover, I think we should pass tax relief, not because of a particular number, whether it is \$4 billion or \$8 billion or \$10 billion, we should pass tax relief because it is the right thing to do. It is the right thing to eliminate the marriage penalty so a couple does not have to pay more in taxes just because they choose to get married.

It is the right thing to give individuals health insurance deductibility. And my colleagues will talk a little more about the tax relief provisions dealing with education or retirement security, getting rid of the Social Security earnings limit. It is not a question of whether or not we have the exact right-on budget surplus, or some technical lingo to justify giving American taxpayers back their own money, it is a question of whether or not it is the right thing to do. And I fundamentally believe it is.

Who would have believed back in 1995 that we would be paying down this much debt? Who would have believed

back in 1995 that we would have set in motion a path not just to continue to retire debt but to pay off the entire national debt in 2013? Over the next 5 years, we are going to pay off over a trillion dollars in public debt, and, again, pay off the entire \$3.6 trillion public debt by 2013.

Now, someone could say, well, how do we know it will be 2013? Granted, this is a projection based on the budget we are putting together that looks forward 5 years, but it is realistic. It is based on an average level of economic growth that we have seen over the past 5 or 10 years.

It is based on the spending projections that we have tried to put together over the next 5 years that invest in things like the national security, increase funding for Veterans health care and the National Institutes of Health as well.

I think it is realistic, but whether or not we pay off the debt by 2013 or 2012 or 2015, I think what is most important is that we have the public debt being reduced. It is headed in the right direction. I view it like a home mortgage. You certainly do not try to pay off your home mortgage in one fell swoop simply because you might have a Christmas bonus or get a raise at work, but what you do is make every effort to achieve a constant payment against that home mortgage so you are reducing the size of the mortgage, increasing the equity and the home that you might own and, obviously, keeping your fiscal house in order so that your family, your children, might feel more and more secure at home. I think that is fiscally responsible.

This is something we are able to achieve with historic tax relief in this budget. I think it is something that we can be proud of, which is exactly why this budget will pass this House and pass the Senate and set us on the right path for the fiscal year.

I would like to yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, while the gentleman is speaking about paying down the public debt, the gentleman might just remind the American people what we have done over the last 3 years, or what we are doing, including this year, with respect to paying down the public debt.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. Speaker, in 1998, when we balanced the unified budget for the first time, we paid off over \$50 billion in debt. In 1999, we took that to over \$80 billion in debt retirement. This year, fiscal year 2000, over \$150 billion. The 4-year total, including the budget we are going to be debating on the Floor here tomorrow, is over \$450 billion in debt relief.

The budget that we will have on the floor, which covers the years 2001 through 2005, will have over \$1 trillion in debt relief, even taking into consideration the \$40 billion that we have set aside for Medicare reforms and prescription drug coverage, even taking into consideration the elimination of

the marriage penalty, the health insurance deductibility for individuals, the small business tax relief package that has already passed this House. Taking into consideration all of those measures, we are going to pay down over a trillion dollars in debt in the next 5 years.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. Speaker, I yield now to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. I appreciate the gentleman's comments on reducing the public debt. I am a new Member of Congress. When I ran for Congress last year, I asked people what they wanted to see Congress do above all else? They said balance the budget, pay off our debt and stop raiding the Social Security Trust Fund.

For many years, this institution has been taking money out of the Social Security Trust Fund and spending it on other government programs. Both parties can be to blame for this. Over the last 30 years, we have taken over \$800 billion out of Social Security to spend in other government programs that have nothing to do with Social Security.

When you are working hard, paycheck to paycheck, seeing those FICA taxes coming out of your paycheck, just remember for the last 30 years a lot of that money has been going to spend on other things other than Medicare and Social Security. For the first time in 30 years, last year, this Congress actually stopped the raid on Social Security.

One thing that I want to talk about is the fact that, and as my colleague from New Hampshire pointed out, Congress has been doing this for so long. Last year, 1999, that was the first year that Congress actually passed a budget that did not take any money out of Social Security and they put that money back into Social Security and into paying off our national debt.

This year, Congress has stopped the raid on Social Security. It is putting that money back into the Social Security Trust Fund and paying off the national debt with that money. What we will be trying to achieve with this new budget that we are passing are four key objectives:

First, continue to stop the raid on the Social Security Trust Fund.

Second, pay down our national debt.

Third, modernize our Medicare programs so that Medicare, which is a law written in 1965, actually corresponds with the year 2000 health care. Where I come from, in the State of Wisconsin, we can do a lot better in Medicare. Some States get great Medicare rates, and I am happy for those States, but not all states, and especially Wisconsin. So we are going to fix the problems we have with Medicare.

Fourth, if people are still overpaying their taxes, give them their money back.

What we are going to be hearing tomorrow on the floor as we debate these

budgets is basically a key debate over these priorities. I think it goes very much to the point of a difference in philosophy that exists between the two parties and between the budget objectives we are going to be hearing debated tomorrow.

I think the philosophy was really portrayed quite well by President Clinton a year ago when he was addressing an audience in Buffalo, New York. Last year, there was about 35,000 people he was speaking to in Buffalo, New York. He said, with respect to all of the government surpluses, which are people overpaying their income taxes and people overpaying their Social Security taxes, he said, and I quote, "We could give you your money back, but we wouldn't be sure that you would spend it right."

Well, therein lies the difference in philosophy. Your money is spent correctly so long as we decide how to spend it. That is the difference in philosophy we have. The President last year gave us a budget that said, let us continue raiding Social Security, as this chart next to me says, let us take 38 percent out of the Social Security Trust Fund to spend on the creation of 120 brand new Federal government programs. There is not enough money coming into Washington that we can ever send money back to the people.

We countered with a different proposal, we said, for once, we have to stop raiding the Social Security Trust Fund and put 100 percent of the Social Security surplus back into Social Security. We have got to get a handle on paying off our national debt. We have been doing that, \$450 billion over the last 4 years under this new majority's leadership. We have been paying off on the national debt.

If people are still overpaying their taxes, after we have stopped the raid on Social Security, after we have our debt going down to where, if our plan is enacted, we will pay off the public debt entirely within 12 years, as fast as we can do it, and if people are still overpaying their taxes, give them their money back by making the Tax Code simpler, by making the Tax Code fairer.

How are we trying to accomplish this? After stopping the raid on Social Security, after paying off our public debt, we are eliminating the Marriage Tax Penalty; we are eliminating the tax on the earnings limit for Social Security; we are making the Tax Code fairer. We are trying to tell working Americans that their work will pay off; that when they work more and they provide more for their family and they overpay their taxes, we will want them to keep some of their own money.

We want them to have more of their own paycheck, because there is a limit to how much Washington will take out of their paycheck. That is a clear philosophical difference between the President's vision and the congressional majority's vision. Nowhere can this be more clear than taking a look at the

family's budget, taking a look at how much money the government has been taking out of their paycheck.

For years, we have been raiding the Social Security Trust Fund. For years, we have been piling on the mountain of debt that is facing our children. Now, we are finally getting a handle on these core challenges, giving families more of their own money after they overpay their taxes, paying off our national debt, completely paying off our public debt in 12 years. And for once, if an individual pays their Social Security taxes, it is actually going to go to Social Security and not to other government programs.

There is another issue I want to talk about, and I know the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER) is going to be joining us shortly on this, and that is Medicare.

□ 2115

The President has proposed some changes to Medicare lately, and I think those are worth talking about. This budget we are going to be talking about tomorrow proposes some changes to Medicare as well. There are big differences between what the President is proposing in Medicare and what this Congress is proposing in Medicare.

If my colleagues recall, last November we passed a Medicare bill which put \$15 billion back into the Medicare trust fund, back into the Medicare network, because we noticed, after countless town hall meetings, after countless tours of the hospitals, of the skilled nursing facilities, of the home health agencies, we noticed that Medicare was suffering and we had to fix some problems in the Medicare network. So we put \$15 billion back into the Medicare situation to help those States that were hit the hardest, States like Kentucky, States like Georgia, States like Wisconsin.

Well, this year the President, who signed that law in November said, sorry, let us cut that money back out. Let us actually cut Medicare by \$16 billion this year to the same accounts, to the same people: the skilled nursing facilities, the home health agencies, the hospitals, the Medicare patients and the Medicare Plus Choice plan itself; the same people we just helped in November he wants to cut right now. On top of that, the President has a prescription drug plan, a prescription drug plan which does not means test, which pays for Ross Perot's prescription drugs and a prescription drug plan which puts the government at the nucleus of the pharmaceutical industries. Basically, the Federal Government telling doctors what they can and cannot prescribe to their patients.

Well, I hope that my family, my mother, my stepfather who are on Medicare right now, if they are in trouble, if they have some health problems on Medicare, I want to make sure that their doctor has the freedom to prescribe whatever he or she thinks is best for them, not what a government bureaucrat says is best for them.

So as we reform Medicare, as we are proposing to do with this budget, we must reform it by making sure that the doctor has the choice of what to prescribe to our parents, what to prescribe to our Medicare patients. We have to make sure that when we add prescription drugs to Medicare, we do it in a way that makes sure that we do not eliminate all of the research and development that is currently being invested in our pharmaceutical industries; make sure that the doctor chooses the drugs, make sure that the centerpiece of our Medicare universe is the patient, not the government.

Well, the President has a different vision: cut Medicare further, raise taxes, raise premiums on beneficiaries, and have a prescription drug plan which does not take care of catastrophic problems and gives drugs to everyone, regardless of one's income, whether one is a multimillionaire or a billionaire.

Now, these are just different principles, different philosophies. But the budget that we are trying to pass tomorrow is the vision we have for the country, which is to take care and address the challenges we have facing us; namely, a national debt that we have to deal with. We have, for the last 4 years, begun to pay that off; \$450 billion, as my colleague from New Hampshire just mentioned. Tomorrow we are going to bring a budget to the floor that makes that look like small potatoes. We are going to bring a budget to the floor that over the next 5 years pays \$1 trillion off of our national debt. Tomorrow, we are going to bring a budget to the floor that completely stops the raid on Social Security, that calls for the passage of legislation which I am actually a coauthor of, Social Security lockbox legislation which says no longer, never again can the Congress and the President go back to the days of raiding the Social Security Trust Fund.

We believe that we have to say that there is an end to the days of raiding Social Security, so we are going to back it up with a law that prohibits the Federal Government from going back and dipping into that Social Security Trust Fund. Then, if one continues to overpay one's taxes, as people are going to be doing, as we see this money coming into Washington, because the President wants to create new government spending programs. Specifically, in this year's budget, he called for creating over 80 new Federal Government spending programs from income tax overpayments. We are saying no to that, yes to paying off debt, yes to stopping the raid on Social Security, and yes to letting people keep their money if they still overpay their taxes by making our Tax Code much fairer, much more simpler.

With that, I would like to have a dialogue with my friend, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER). I know he has been such a champion on health care issues. I appreciate the gentleman's participation in this debate. He

has done so much on the Committee on the Budget for Medicare. I applaud him for the measurements he has passed, for the leadership and insight he has given us on Medicare. I know the gentleman wants to talk about the Medicare reforms.

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, I think the gentleman has covered a lot of these areas very well.

It is my understanding, and I would ask the gentleman, but if we took how much the President spends over the next 5 years really on his prescription drug plan and Medicare, it is only about \$28 million, and how does that compare to what we are doing in this budget?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, if we look at the President's budget, he is saying let us spend \$28 billion in Medicare for prescription drugs, but that is only over 2 years. In the year 2003, in the year 2004 and in the year 2005, he spends zero money on Medicare.

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, the gentleman means he has no benefits for anyone over the next several years?

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, that is right; \$28 billion over the next 3 years and then zero after that.

What our budget does is spend \$40 billion of hard cash, \$40 billion over the next 5 years, for prescription drugs for Medicare and for reforms for the Medicare system itself.

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, I think what the gentleman points out is very true. The President cut Medicare or proposed to cut Medicare by \$16 billion. What I am seeing as I travel across my district, as I have held a number of town hall meetings, is that right now we have hospitals that are operating in the red, rural hospitals that provide that local care that is needed, to where if there is an emergency, a stroke, for example, it is very important to get there immediately, yet we have rural hospitals that possibly will have to close because of the cuts that this administration has already done through HCFA and these further cuts that they are talking about.

Then the President is also talking about raising taxes and fees, and some of those fees are to some of these providers. I read recently and what we hear is that now some of the providers and physicians are beginning to drop out of Medicare and they are beginning to drop out of Medicare because of the cuts, as well as the administrative difficulties of dealing with this administration have become so complex that they are saying we can no longer provide the care. What is this going to do for our senior citizens? When we start operating a hospital or nursing home, a long-term care facility and we really have to cut back on the number of nurses that we have that are caring for those patients, it is going to have a tremendous impact on the health care

and the quality of health care that we can provide for our senior citizens.

I think it is very important to point out that as I was out traveling across the district, we compared the President's prescription drug plans with a plan that focuses on those that are the most needy. Now, this \$40 billion that we have set aside would really allow us to focus on a prescription drug plan that really addresses those that are in need without, as the gentleman has said, providing benefits for the Ross Perots of the world that really do not need this benefit.

Madam Speaker, can my colleagues imagine having a school teacher or a brick layer paying taxes so that they can buy drug benefits for Ross Perot. That makes no sense at all. Yet, I have had patients that have come into my office and they have not been able to afford their prescription drugs because they are living on maybe just Social Security, maybe \$600 or \$700 a month, and they have a \$30 to \$100 prescription drug bill a month, and how are they going to pay for that. It is a difference between am I going to buy food and clothing or am I going to buy this prescription drug. Oftentimes they do not buy the prescription drug. Their hypertension goes untreated or their heart disease goes untreated and they have complications that they really did not have to have, so that our families and our senior citizens suffer because of that.

So we have proposed, let us set aside this \$40 billion, and this money starts immediately. It does not start down the road. Also, as we look at the President's plan, the cost escalates tremendously. He projects it as only \$28 billion over the next 5 years and the reason is because he does not give any benefit for the last couple of years. But then, if we look at the projections to his costs, they rise tremendously because he is covering those very wealthy or those folks that do not need it.

Yet, if we target it toward those in need and then we look at those that have high costs, those that have very high-cost medications that cannot afford it and if we have it targeted toward those truly in need, then I think we have a benefit that does not wreck Medicare and it is something that is fiscally responsible, and it also targets the people that need it the most.

I am very encouraged by what we have done, and I think that it really has taken the Republican Congress to focus, and to first get our House in order to make sure that we balance the budget, that we have this surplus that we can pay down the debt so that we eliminate the debt, the publicly-held debt that we are leaving to our children, and now we can start working and providing the kind of health care benefits that are needed in this country.

Madam Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit too about when we are talking about health care and what we have done, we have to get back to basic

research, because I think it is very important to look, and we can see here on this chart that deals with NIH funding. If we look at this, actually, over the last 5 years, there was a real effort made when the Republicans took control of this Congress to say, we are going to try to double the funding on basic research, National Institutes of Health research. What we see is that we have continually funded NIH, science, basic research, well above what this administration and the Clinton-Gore and Democrats have proposed.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, did the gentleman just say that the Republican Congress has actually put more of a commitment toward basic health research than the President's administration has?

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, there is no question. This chart I think really shows that clearly. This blue line represents what the Republicans have put in compared to what the administration, the Democrats want to, and we can see that every year it is more. Now, this year, finally, we have convinced the administration to come up with the same level, but we have increased the funding this year by \$1 billion to basic research.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, I know the gentleman is a physician. Could the gentleman just explain what kind of things we are funding with this kind of basic research? What kinds of diseases are we attempting to cure? What kinds of institutions is this money going toward?

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, I am glad the gentleman asked that, because when we look at the quality health care we have in this country, it really derives from our basic research. A number of years ago, and the gentleman may remember back when JFK said he wanted to put a man on the moon and had a goal of doing that. Well, we have many diseases that NIH is funding and diseases like the gentleman has mentioned, like cancer. There are several cancers that we really have cures for now, but there are many that we do not, and this increased funding will go toward finding cures for the different types of cancer that we have. If anyone has been affected by that in the family, they know what a tragedy it is to have someone struck down in the prime of their life or even in their later years with cancer and how devastating that disease can be. I will tell the gentleman, there is probably not any greater impact that we could have in this country than to find a cure for those diseases. This is exactly where it will come from, as we begin to fund more basic research to find the causes of cancer and the cures.

There are other things like disease which is obviously very important. Madam Speaker, 24 percent of our Medicare budget goes toward treating diabetes and the complications of diabetes. It is one of the largest reasons for kidney failure in the country. It is

one of the largest reasons that we have in blindness. I think we are close. I do not know how far away, but we are close because of the funding we have of being able to find some real breakthroughs in diabetes. But we continue to raise the funding for diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. How many people have seen the tragedy of that. We think of even Ronald Reagan and the tragedy that Alzheimer's has caused in our country.

So these are the kinds of programs that it funds. When we look at the consequence and the benefits, how much we will get a return on this investment, how much more we have put in than the Democrats, then we really understand the difference in priorities that we have.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I think he just hit the nail right on the head, and that is priorities.

It is very important that people who look at these budgets see that it is a series of priorities, what we are trying to achieve in this budget. We hear all the time: I did not think the Republicans ever wanted to put more money into government programs than the Democrats. We hear that kind of thing all the time. It is all about priorities. The priorities we believe so fundamentally in is the proper role of the Federal Government, and one of the most important and proper roles of the Federal Government is in the funding of basic research, basic research to improve the health and welfare of our people.

One of the things that we have to tackle is all of these diseases that are plaguing our society. Heart disease is something that affects my own family. My father passed away by a heart attack, so did my grandfather. Personally I very much would like to see a breakthrough in heart disease research. Cancer is something that has hit our families. I know it has for so many people. We are getting close to breakthroughs in cancer research. These are important things the Federal Government can do to improve the lives of millions of Americans. Alzheimer's, all of these things are hard commitments that the Republican Party has made. More importantly, it is not about Republicans or Democrats, it is about doing what is right.

The budget that we are bringing to the floor tomorrow is a continuation on the priorities that we have established here in Congress with these budgets: funding basic research to try and find breakthrough cures for cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, diabetes, stopping the raid on the Social Security Trust Fund so that when one pays their Social Security taxes, it actually goes back to Social Security.

□ 2130

We have priorities such as fixing our Medicare program, making sure that Medicare is corresponding with the year 2000 medicine, paying off our national debt, paying off our public debt

in 12 years' time, a trillion dollars over the next 5 years.

If people still overpay their taxes after we reach these priorities, we are going to give them their money back by making the Tax Code fairer and simpler. That is basically the priorities that we are seeking to establish with this budget.

The President has vastly different priorities: raiding Social Security, increasing debt, less of a commitment to health research, and new Federal Government programs, 80 new programs this year alone that he is calling for.

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, if the gentleman from Georgia will yield, let me say in conclusion that this increase in funding that is going to have a tremendous impact on finding breakthroughs and cures, as the gentleman said, only came about because we looked back a number of years; and we had deficits in the \$200 billion range. Now we are going to be paying off \$170 billion of the publicly held debt this next year.

But the only reason we can put and continue to put money in basic research is because of the fact that we have not started all the new programs that the President asked for, that he wanted to spend more money on more programs and bigger government.

We have restrained the growth of government. But we have emphasized those priorities that are very important. We are doing a better job of doing what government is supposed to do and not spending money and wasting it on a lot of programs that have been proven to be ineffective.

So I am very encouraged that we are spending it in Medicare and targeted prescription drugs where it is needed, basic research, and that we are still able to pay down the debt, provide some tax fairness and relief.

I think we have got an outstanding budget. I do hope my colleagues on the other side will find their way to support this budget.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam Speaker, as we wind down on our time here, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER) is like me, they come from an area that is rich in agriculture.

There is one thing in this budget that I want to make sure we point out to all our friends in ag country. Ever since I have been here, for the last 6 years, one of my passions has been to try to reform our crop insurance program. We know, coming from ag country, that the current crop insurance program we have is a disaster.

Well, last year in this House, we passed a historic crop insurance reform package. I am told that tomorrow the Senate takes up their crop insurance reform package, and we are going to be going to conference very quickly.

The really good thing about this budget is that last year we put some \$6 billion into our budget for crop insurance reform. This year, over the next 5 years, we plussed that up to \$7.4 billion.

So we are going to be able to provide our farmers with a real risk management tool that is going to take the decision out of the hands of the government when it comes to crop insurance and put that decision into our farmers' hands finally and will allow our folks to manage their own crop insurance and give them the flexibility of deciding what they are going to insure and how they are going to insure it, the same way they insure their car and their home. There is going to be one more tremendous asset that we are going to be able to deliver to our farmers.

I am excited about this budget. It does any number of things that are going to benefit every single American. We are going to provide real meaningful tax relief. We are going to continue to save and protect Social Security and Medicare. We are going to continue to provide research dollars to improve the health care of every single American. We are going to improve the national security of this country.

This is the commitment that Republicans have made to the American people. Once again, we are going to live up to the commitment that we have continued to make.

Madam Speaker, the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) has joined us here. I am happy to yield to the gentleman from South Dakota.

Mr. THUNE. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) shares the same concerns I have and is very instrumental in trying to achieve some meaningful reform in the area of crop insurance.

I just want to say, too, and echo some of the things my colleagues have said here this evening in terms of this budget and what it accomplishes and the statements that it makes as far as what our priorities are and the people that we want to try and help.

I think, again, this makes a strong statement that we are going to support our producers in this country. The dollars that have been put in here for crop insurance, the dollars that are set aside for emergency assistance again this year is an important statement I think to our farmers and ranchers across this country and many of whom were in town here earlier this week to talk about the plight of rural America.

The gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER), the good doctor, also well acquainted with the health care and the issues that affect a lot of our rural hospitals and the changes that are being proposed in the area of Medicare reform have been significant in terms of the last few years and what we have been able to accomplish and what we did last year in assisting rural hospitals and home health care agencies and skilled nursing facilities and others, trying to restore some of the savings that have been achieved as a result of the balanced budget agreement of a couple of years ago.

But in my area of the country, in rural areas of the country, we have not

participated to the same extent in this great economy that we have had the last few years. Rural areas are suffering, our farmers and our ranchers, our seniors, the populations that predominate where I come from, the State of South Dakota.

This is a budget which recognizes those needs which attempts to address the concerns that our constituents have in the area of prescription drugs, which is a pocketbook issue. It strikes very hard. We want to make sure that those low-income seniors who do not have some form of coverage, that we craft something as a percent of this budget process that will address that need that is out there.

Paying down the debt. What is more important to the future of our children? Also, the commitment that we make in the area of education.

If we look at this budget and what it accomplishes, the priorities that it sets, farmers, seniors, our children, our military, restoring and strengthening America's defenses, paying down public debt, dealing with the issue of prescription drugs, locking up the Social Security surplus, there are so many positives in this budget.

This is going to be a tough vote tomorrow because our friends on the other side who are more interested in adopting the President's budget, which included higher taxes, more government programs, 84 new programs, and 200 billion plus in new fees and taxes, is a very different approach. It is a statement of their priorities.

This budget that we vote on tomorrow and hopefully adopt is a statement of our priorities. It talks about the things that we think are important. We do believe in America's families. We have got to do better by our children in the area of education as well as ensuring that they are not saddled with a burden of debt that has been piled on by generations of poor spending habits here in Washington.

So I appreciate the work that has been done in the Committee on Budget, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the hard work that has been done in the area of crop insurance to ensure that we have funding in there for our farmers and our ranchers for obviously the very difficult times they have had in the last several years with low prices and weather-related disasters. I certainly, in my part of the country, know firsthand what that is like.

This is a budget which addresses those needs, which I think is a statement, a reflection, frankly, of our priorities and where we think we ought to be moving and from a public policy standpoint in the future.

So I appreciate the hard work of the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER) as well and the expertise that he brings in the area of health care in helping us craft policies that make sense for a Medicare program that serves the populations that need it, and that is responsible to taxpayers,

that makes those needed reforms to make it viable into the future, and addresses that much needed concern out there, an issue, again, which is very important in South Dakota and I am sure in the gentlemen's districts as well, dealing with prescription drugs and what we might be able to do.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) for his comments and his strong leadership, particularly in the area of agriculture where we work so closely together.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. FLETCHER) to wrap it up. I know he has a couple points he wants to close with.

Mr. FLETCHER. Madam Speaker, this budget, as we have heard and been able to speak about tonight I think is really the work, and I have to give the gentleman from Ohio (Chairman KASICH) certainly a lot of credit for all the work he has done to work and even get an agreement with the Senate. We begin to work with an agreement with them. It is the culmination of that to making sure we save 100 percent of the Social Security, that we strengthen Medicare, that we set aside \$40 billion.

Because we believe that, now that we have saved the money, the taxpayers' money, that we have actually the revenue now to strengthen Medicare and to improve it with the Medicare prescription drugs we talked about, pay down the debt by 2013, promote taxes that are fair, and restore American defense and education.

We have passed several bills that have given back more local control, give 95 percent of the dollars back in the classroom, increase our funding for IDEA, those individuals with disability, continue to provide more resources back to the classroom with local flexibility and control.

Lastly, and I appreciate the opportunity to close, is that I sat here 2 years ago and listened to the President's speech, and he talked about family farms. He talked about wanting to support the family farms. I tell my colleagues our farmers are really hurting back in Kentucky. I know that the gentleman from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) mentioned that.

We have got a problem. We have had it. The administration, the Clinton-Gore administration has certainly come after our burly growers. I understand why they have done that. We all are concerned about smoking and the health care interest of our youth. But they have provided absolutely no relief for our farmers back home. We have seen a 65 percent reduction in their incomes.

I am glad, with the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) here, that we were able to put the \$7 billion or so, \$6 billion last year, that we can certainly increase crop insurance, that we have been able to, even with some supplemental payments, we were able to bring back \$125 million this year back to Kentucky alone to help our farmers.

As we look at this budget, I think it covers the full gamut. I think we have got an outstanding budget. I am just very happy and pleased to join my colleagues to say that this can strengthen our family farms, our education, for our senior citizens, and really provide a brighter future for our children. So I am very pleased to be here tonight to participate in this discussion on our budget.

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CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WILSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Madam Speaker, we have heard two presentations, one by the Democrats and one by the Republicans, on the budget. We will have the budget on the floor tomorrow to vote on, and nothing is more important than the budget this week. But nothing is more important than the budget at any time.

The most important decisions we make in Washington are the decisions related to the budget and the appropriations process. The budget is the opening of the process which ends with the appropriations process. People should understand that we broadly categorize certain spending goals in the budget, and then it is the appropriations process that carries them through with the detailed expenditures.

I want to talk about the Congressional Black Caucus Budget, a budget for maximum investment and opportunity, which we will have on the floor tomorrow as an alternative to the President's budget and the budget of the majority Republicans.

Our budget is very important, and I am going to spend half my time talking about the priorities of that budget, the six priorities of that budget. But the seventh priority is the one that I want to begin with. The mission of our budget is clearly, the Congressional Black Caucus Budget, an advocacy budget. It advocates for those that are left out and forgotten, the poor in general, and more specifically African Americans and other neglected minorities.

We concur with three-quarters of the President's budget and his priorities. But we would like to emphasize certain kinds of things that get left out. So in each one of these seven areas, education, housing, health care, economic development and livable communities, foreign aid, welfare and low-income assistance, and juvenile justice and law enforcement, we have special kinds of priorities that we have within those categories. We would like to make certain that those do not get left out.

This presentation will start with priority number seven, which is a very unusual priority for the Congressional Black Caucus to focus on. That is juve-

nile justice and law enforcement. Law enforcement.

Now, I understand that in the Democratic alternative budget that is going to be presented tomorrow, there will be some recommended increases in the law enforcement budget, the Justice Department budget. But that is all about increasing at the investigative end, increases for the prosecutions in general.

There are a number of things that are going to happen in that proposed set of budget increases that we are not particularly concerned with. We would like to see the Justice Department capacity increased to handle some other kinds of pressing emergencies.

For example, we have an explosion of high profile corruption and malfunctioning of the criminal justice system across America. In Los Angeles, in Illinois, Louisville, Kentucky and New York, on and on it goes. Right now, we have these high profile cases that should attract the attention of all Americans. Certainly the overwhelming majority of Americans are concerned about these malfunctionings and this corruption.

Certainly in the case of Amadou Diallo and the verdict of a jury there in New York State, the capital, Albany, related to a case where Amadou Diallo was standing on his front step and was approached by four policemen, and they shot him to death. Forty-one bullets were fired.

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He was hit 19 times, and some of the bullets show he was hit after he was on the porch. Nevertheless, those policemen were found not guilty of anything; not negligent homicide, not reckless endangerment, not guilty of anything. A survey taken a few days later showed that the overwhelming majority of the people of New York State were outraged. They disagreed profoundly with that verdict and felt that a great miscarriage of justice had occurred.

But on the other coast, in Los Angeles, we had a series of revelations over the last few months indicating that the police department has been carrying out corrupt practices for almost two decades; that there are people in the police department who routinely, routinely, have planted evidence on people of drug selling, evidence of various kinds, planted guns on people, beaten people, and shot people. And the Los Angeles government now is getting ready to pay out millions of dollars in response to court suits that are being brought on these matters, as well as many, many cases that will be overturned.

The lives of numerous individuals, thousands of individuals when we consider the families of the people who have been wrongfully convicted or harassed, beaten up, the lives of thousands of individuals are involved in this gross systemic ongoing set of miscarriages of justice.

In the State of Illinois we have a situation where there were 25 people on